

**PINELLAS COUNTY METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
MINUTES – MEETING OF JANUARY 14, 2015**

The Pinellas County Metropolitan Planning Organization, created by the State of Florida in accordance with Title 23 United States Code, Section 134 and Chapter 339.175 Florida Statutes, met in regular session on Wednesday, January 14, 2015 in the chambers of the Pinellas County Commission, 315 Court Street, Clearwater, Florida.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Kennedy – *Chairman* – Councilman, City of St. Petersburg
John Morroni – *Vice Chairman* – Board of County Commissioners
Doreen Hock-DiPolito – *Treasurer* – Vice Mayor, Councilmember, City of Clearwater
Cookie Kennedy – Secretary – Commissioner, City of Indian Rocks Beach, representing the beach communities of Belleair Beach, Belleair Shore, Indian Rocks Beach, Indian Shores, Madeira Beach, North Redington Beach, Treasure Island, Redington Beach, Redington Shores, St. Pete Beach

Sandra Bradbury – Mayor, City of Pinellas Park
Julie Bujalski – Mayor, City of Dunedin, representing PSTA
Dave Eggers – Board of County Commissioners
Cliff Merz – Vice Mayor, City of Safety Harbor, representing Safety Harbor/Oldsmar/Tarpon Springs

Kevin Piccarreto – Commissioner, Town of Belleair, representing the in land communities of Belleair, Belleair Bluffs, Gulfport, Kenneth City, Seminole, South Pasadena

Darden Rice – Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg
Karen Seel – Board of County Commissioners (arrived at 1:15 p.m.)
Michael Smith – Commissioner, City of Largo
John Tornga – Commissioner, City of Dunedin
Lee Royal, non-voting advisory – (representing the Secretary, Florida Department of Transportation District 7)

MEMBERS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Sarah Ward – MPO Interim Executive Director
Al Bartolotta – Pinellas County MPO
Rodney Chatman – Pinellas County MPO
Chelsea Hardy – County Attorney's Office
Brian Beaty – Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Bob Bray – City of Pinellas Park
David Chase – City of Pinellas Park
Tom Whalen – City of St. Petersburg
Cheryl Stacks – City of St. Petersburg
Gina Harvey – Pinellas County DEI
Nancy McKibben – Pinellas County DEI
Dave Talhouk – Pinellas County DEI
Brad Miller – Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority (PSTA)
Ann Venables – URS Consultant
Jim Phillips – Hardesty and Hanover Consultant
Brian Smith – BPAC Chairman
Carlos Lopez – Cherry Bekaert
John Gilberto – Cherry Bekaert
Lauren Martin – Cherry Bekaert

Bill Jonson – City of Clearwater
Chelsea Favero – Pinellas County MPO
Sarah Perch – Pinellas County MPO
Carolyn Kuntz – MPO Recorder

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Kennedy called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

II. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Commissioner Eggers performed the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance. Everyone on the dais introduced themselves.

III. WELCOME NEW MPO MEMBERS – MICHAEL SMITH REPRESENTING LARGO, DAVE EGGERS, REPRESENTING PINELLAS COUNTY, CLIFF MERZ OF SAFETY HARBOR, OLDSMAR, AND TARPON SPRINGS, AND DARDEN RICE OF ST PETERSBURG

The MPO welcomed the new MPO members: Michael Smith representing Largo; Dave Eggers representing Pinellas County; Cliff Merz representing Safety Harbor, Oldsmar, and Tarpon Springs; and Darden Rice representing St. Petersburg and Chairman Kennedy provided a brief background for each including Commissioner John Tornga of Dunedin.

IV. PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING MPO MEMBERS CHARLIE JUSTICE, DAVID ARCHIE, AND KEN WELCH

The MPO thanked Charlie Justice and Ken Welch for their service on the MPO and presented each with a framed certificate. Chairman Kennedy noted that Mayor David Archie would receive his certificate next month.

V. CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Clearwater Councilman Bill Jonson thanked Gina Harvey and David Scott for their assistance in resolving the street lighting problem on U.S. 19 between S.R. 580 and Curlew Road.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. **Approval of Minutes – Meeting of December 10, 2014**
- B. **Approval of Invoices**
 - 1. **Tindale-Oliver and Associates**
 - 2. **Cherry Bekaert (MPO Auditor)**
 - 3. **Risk Allocation (Pinellas County – January)**
- C. **Approval of General Planning Consultant Amendments**
- D. **Approval of Countywide Crash Data System Scope**
- E. **Approval of Committee Appointments**

Commissioner Cookie Kennedy moved, Commissioner Morroni seconded, and motion carried to approve the Consent Agenda (Vote 12-0).

VII. PRESENTATION AND/OR ACTION ITEMS

A. Dunedin Causeway Project Development and Environmental Study Presentation

Ann Venables, URS, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation regarding the Project Development and Environment Study for the Dunedin Causeway. The study will look at all the alternatives, including no build, rehabilitation, and replacement. The project limits are from the Honeymoon Island State Park, west of the Royal Stewart Arms Parkway, east to the intersection of Gary Place/Gary Circle on Ward Island. The project goal is to identify and develop a preferred alternative that is supported by a consensus of the stakeholders and addresses transportation and community needs for mobility and safety, with minimal environmental, social, and economic impacts. The process will include community input, beginning with a large public kick-off meeting. The Federal Highway Administration will

need to approve the documentation in order to be eligible for federal funding. The City established the Dunedin Causeway Bridge Ad Hoc Advisory Committee to provide community input during the study, in addition to the other community outreach events. The community concerns include direct involvement/representation during the study, preservation of the beach and unique recreational access, preservation/enhancement of the natural beauty, bicycle/pedestrian facilities on the bridges, and potential visual impacts. The key environmental issues include wetlands and essential fish habitat, wildlife and habitat, cultural resources, maritime archaeological survey may be required, noise issues, and potential section 4(f) recreational lands. The key engineering/design issues include limit impacts to the recreation and natural areas, maintain recreational access, avoid utility relocations, maintain evacuation route, identify cost effective solution, enhance trail connectivity across the Causeway, and roadway improvements limited to bridge approaches. She reviewed the issues related to the relief bridge and summarized the options for the relief bridge horizontal alignment; issues related to the main bridge and options for the main bridge vertical and horizontal alignments.

During the presentation, Commissioner Seel arrived at 1:15 p.m.

Upon query by Vice Mayor Merz regarding width, Jim Phillips, subconsultant, responded the bridge doesn't currently meet safety standards, which drops the bridge's sufficiency rating.

There was some discussion regarding the different elevation options and the grade percentage.

Mayor Bujalski asked whether there was any consideration of undergrounding the electrical lines. Mr. Phillips responded the study only considers the utilities that are affected by the bridge. Mayor Bujalski asked that undergrounding be considered as an option. Mayor Bujalski asked whether a traffic study was going to be done as part of the study. Ms. Venables responded that only a minimal study will be done evaluating the level of service. Mr. Phillips added that the traffic congestion isn't due to the number of lanes but due to other events, such as turning movements and bridge openings.

Commissioner Tornga asked about the coordination with the Coast Guard, which Mr. Phillips responded they have begun preliminary discussions with them and will continue throughout the study.

Commissioner Eggers asked that they look at incorporating how far back on Ward Island would be necessary for the different alternatives.

Regarding the schedule, Ms. Venables responded it's a two-year study. Regarding the public hearing process, Ms. Venables responded they are following the NEPA process but noted the local government could hold public hearings to address issues throughout the project.

B. FY 2013/14 MPO Audit Report – Presentation and Acceptance

Each member of the Cherry Bekaert consultant team introduced themselves: John Gilberto as a partner, Lauren Martin as the Audit Manager, and Carlos Lopez as the auditor in charge. Mr. Gilberto reviewed the auditor's required communication noting their responsibilities under the Generally Accepted Auditing Standards, Government Auditing Standards, OMB Circular A-133, and Section 218.415 Florida Statutes. This includes reviewing the MPO's financial statements and performing test work, reviewing risk factors, and ensuring the information included in the financial statements is properly supported. The auditor performs tests of compliance with provisions of state laws, regulations, and statutes. Mr. Gilberto informed the Board that their finding was a "no comment report", which means there wasn't anything that needed to be brought to the Board's attention as a

material weakness or significant deficiency or material compliance. Based on the audit of the financial statements, the auditor's report is an unmodified opinion, which is the highest level of assurance that can be received from an auditor that indicates the financial statements are correct in all material instances and in compliance with all required disclosures under the standards and Statutes on a consistent basis. The auditors performed a single audit of the federal grants since the federal grant fund expenditures for the audit year met the threshold, while a single audit of the state grant was not performed since the state grant fund expenditures did not meet the threshold. Subsequent to the date of the financials, the MPO transferred its staff services agreement from the County to the Pinellas Planning Council and, as part of that transfer, the County will provide a one-time payout of \$155,000 to cover accrued leave and will continue to provide the MPO's Section 5305 Planning Grant's local match of 10%.

Mr. Lopez reviewed two adjustments that were a result of the audit. The first adjustment was a recurring entry to true up general fund revenue and due to Pinellas County to zero out the fund balance. The second adjusting entry was to remove a \$5,000 receivable and reclassify the corresponding expense to the General Fund. This amount related to unreimbursed payments to TBARTA for work associated with the Chairs Coordinating Committee. There were no uncorrected misstatements, no disagreements or difficulties with management, nor consultations with other accountants related to their engagement. He reviewed the auditor's judgment regarding the quality of the accounting principles, no known fraud or illegal acts, and the auditors were independent of the MPO. He provided a summary of the statement of the MPO's net position.

Ms. Martin reviewed the single audit results, noting the MPO was considered a high risk auditee as defined by OMB Circular A-133 based on prior year findings. There were no findings this year, which means the MPO has one more year of being considered a high risk auditee. If there are no findings next year, then the MPO would be considered a low risk auditee. The difference between a high risk and low risk auditee is the number of programs that are required to be audited. A high risk auditee requires an audit of 50% of the programs where they receive funding and a low risk auditee requires an audit of 25%. There were no deficiencies identified in the programs tested and a Data Collection Form will be completed and filed by January 23, 2015. Ms. Martin reviewed the statement of activity and the major programs included in the single audit.

During the presentation, Commissioner Morroni left at 1:44 p.m. and returned at 1:50 p.m.

Mayor Bradbury moved, Councilmember Rice seconded, and motion carried to accept the FY13/14 MPO Audit Report (Vote 13-0).

C. Report on Pinellas Trail Security Task Force Meeting of January 13, 2015

Ms. Ward introduced Rodney Chatman, Planning Section Manager, as a new MPO staff member. Mr. Chatman provided a brief report on the recent Pinellas Trail Security Task Force (PTSTF) meeting. The PTSTF received a report on the ongoing law enforcement activities, which included strategies such as bicycle patrols on the Trail in the Bay Pines area, St. Petersburg's approach to locational patrol on sections of the Trail to increase police visibility and law enforcement; and Clearwater's recently-completed study to look at options to enhance safety along the Trail. They received an update from the City of St. Petersburg regarding the installation of cameras along sections of the Trail within their jurisdiction. The City submitted their application to the County for the cameras on Monday. The application is for six poles on the Trail from 49th Street to 43rd Street at a cost of approximately \$130,000 using local funds. The City has selected a contractor and they hope to have the project completed by late spring. The Pinellas County Risk Management provided an update regarding their annual inspection of the Trail that will begin on Friday and take approximately two days to complete. They will be looking at identifying safety hazards that can be addressed along the Trail. Risk Management will generate a report

that identifies improvements and the report will be transmitted to the County Departments that have jurisdiction over those areas of improvement. The next PTSTF meeting is scheduled for April 14.

Cheryl Stacks, City of St. Petersburg Transportation Manager, provided an update regarding the status of the installation of cameras along the Trail. The St. Petersburg staff has been working with their IT Department and they have recommended a system that is available under the City's current procurement guidelines that uses a fiber communication system rather than wireless that is being used by the City of Bradenton. The IT Department felt the system was more reliable and faster in capturing and sending data to the St. Petersburg Police Department. The system would still be replicable to other agencies. This was discussed with the Sheriff's Office and they use the same types of software that will be used with the camera system. St. Petersburg staff feels it could still serve as a pilot program for other communities along the Pinellas Trail.

Chairman Kennedy explained the issues that need to be resolved with the County. The City is looking at the statutory requirement of a 30-day time period to store the video while the County is requesting that video be stored for a year, which would increase the cost by approximately \$100,000. In addition, the County is requiring the City to perform directional drilling that requires 5 feet to install the cable as opposed to the City's initial plan to drill 18 inches, which increases the cost by approximately \$30,000. These requirements would increase the total cost for installing the cameras to approximately \$250,000 for St. Petersburg to contribute to the safety on their portion of the Pinellas Trail. Upon query, Ms. Stacks clarified the directional drilling of five feet was due to the fact this was a former railroad corridor and the reverter clause that would apply. Chairman Kennedy noted the City felt it was a low risk if the tracks were ever used again by CSX and, if so, the City would abandon the use so they feel 18 inches is adequate. Ms. Stacks added they are looking at using 5 megapixel cameras instead of the 3 megapixel cameras used by Bradenton to allow for a high definition image for adjudication purposes.

Upon query regarding the reasons the City is moving forward with using fiber optics as opposed to wireless, Ms. Stacks responded their IT Department explained that the fiber optics sends a reliable clear signal with consistent and reliable speeds to the police department. When the City submitted their permit application to the County, they asked them to reconsider the requirement for directional drilling versus trenching. The City is waiting on the County's reply to their request. The County indicated they would have a representative from the County Attorney's Office contact them regarding the data storage requirement so that issue can be addressed. Ms. Stacks will continue to provide updates as they continue to work with the County. Chairman Kennedy indicated the City will need to determine how to fund the additional costs. Upon query as to a partnership between the City and the County, Chairman Kennedy indicated the City's request had been declined. Ms. Stacks added that there is the option of applying for Transportation Alternatives funding; however, there are already a number of projects included on the list. Regarding the reasons for the 1-year retention period versus the 30-day retention period, Ms. Stacks responded the County didn't provide a clear answer as to their reasons.

Commissioner Seel asked that City staff provide a one-page sheet that details all the issues as outlined today with the funding implications that she might be able to assist with. Ms. Stacks responded she would send the information to her and copy Sarah.

Chelsea Hardy, MPO attorney, explained that the 30-day retention period in the Florida Statutes is the minimum amount of time and that it's up to the discretion of local agencies for a longer retention period. Pinellas County is concerned about the potential for liability on the Trail. Chairman Kennedy noted that incidents could be saved for longer periods. Commissioner Tornga asked whether the City could transfer the data to the County if they wished to retain the data longer than 30 days.

Upon query, Chairman Kennedy responded that installation of the cameras would be permanent and the City would evaluate whether other sections would benefit from cameras.

Vice Mayor Merz asked that the one-page summary of issues include potential engineering reasons for the 5 feet versus 18 inches. Commissioner Cookie Kennedy asked that all the members receive a copy of the one-page summary.

Commissioner Seel explained the County was concerned that installation of the security cameras along the Trail would be a large budget item if other municipalities decided they wanted the cameras after St. Petersburg tested the program. The County didn't want to set a precedent with the City of St. Petersburg. The County doesn't have a grant program. She suggested the use of the Transportation Alternatives fund since this was an eligible project. Although there is a long list of projects on the list, the MPO could prioritize the security cameras for the funds.

Chairman Kennedy asked that an updated report be included on the next agenda.

D. Letter of Agreement and Invoice for Design and Conduct of the Tampa Bay Transportation Management Area (TMA) Leadership Group Meetings

Ms. Ward provided some background information on the formation of the Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group meeting. FDOT had previously provided funding for administrative support. As the group moves forward, they will be required to provide the support for the organization. The Staff Directors for Pinellas, Pasco, and Hillsborough MPO met with the Consortium to discuss funding arrangements. Based on discussions and negotiation, they came up with a fee of approximately \$27,500 to provide support to the Leadership Group with the amount for each MPO based on population. Since Pinellas County has approximately 35% of the population, their share would be \$11,500. The Consortium would facilitate the meetings and provide support between meetings. They solicited bids from others and they were all within the same range for this type of work. The elected officials indicated their desire for an independent facilitator versus elected officers within the group. The Staff Directors support the direction of using the Florida Conflict Resolution Consortium for this year. MPO staff is requesting authorization to sign the Letter of Agreement and pay the invoices pursuant to the meeting schedule as outlined in the agenda packet. The MPO has allocated two tasks in the UPWP for regional work. All MPOs are required to allocate a certain amount for regional work. In addition, the work associated with the Chairs Coordinating Committee and its Citizens Advisory Committee has been reduced with only one meeting a year. Some of those funds will be used for the TMA activities.

Commissioner Eggers left at 2:20 p.m. and returned at 2:21 p.m.

Chairman Kennedy noted he is a member of the TMA Group, as well as Vice Mayor Hock-DiPolito and Commissioner Seel. He noted the benefits of the regional group where they were able to show FDOT that the region is speaking with one voice by providing a regional approach.

Councilmember Rice moved, Vice Mayor Hock-DiPolito seconded, and motion carried to approve the Letter of Agreement and scheduled invoicing (Vote 12-0).

Commissioner Piccarreto left at 2:22 p.m. and returned at 2:25 p.m.

E. Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee Recommendations – Approval

• **Approval of BPAC Recommendation Regarding Dunedin Causeway Bridge Project Development and Environmental Study**

Brian Smith, BPAC Chairman, came forward and summarized the recommendations to be used as guidelines as the Dunedin Causeway Bridge Project Development and Environmental Study proceeds. The BPAC voted to support a bridge design that would include separated trail accommodations with a minimum width of 12 – 15 feet, allow fishing only on one side of the bridge so as not to conflict with pedestrians and bicyclists; and minimize environmental impacts and access impacts.

Following discussion and clarification that that the recommendations are only guidelines, ***Commissioner Eggers moved, Mayor Bujalski seconded, and motion carried to accept the BPAC recommendations for forwarding to Pinellas County and the consultant (URS) (Vote 13-0).***

• **Approval of BPAC Recommendation Regarding Honeymoon Island Trail Wayfinding Signage**

Mr. Smith summarized the BPAC recommendation regarding the Honeymoon Island Trail Wayfinding signage. The BPAC voted to request the wayfinding signs be larger and more legible and the directions more specific for motorists who want to access the State Park. They also suggested signage that would indicate the location of legal parking areas or small craft launches for those accessing the recreation areas along the Causeway.

Mayor Bradbury felt the markers would be beneficial for all areas along the Trail where there are natural parks.

Commissioner Eggers moved, Commissioner Cookie Kennedy seconded, and motion carried to approve the BPAC recommendation (Vote 13-0).

Mr. Smith noted the Pinellas BPAC held a joint meeting with the Hillsborough County Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and will continue to do so twice a year. It was felt this was beneficial with good discussion and there could be recommendations in the future.

Chairman Kennedy added that this could be an agenda item for the Tampa Bay TMA Leadership Group.

Commissioner Seel suggested a joint event between Pinellas and Hillsborough upon the completion of the Courtney Campbell Trail. Commissioner Seel noted she has discussed the possibility of a bike share program with the Mayors of St. Petersburg and Clearwater; however, her research indicates it's expensive. She thought if it was profitable, the profit could be used to fund the arts; however, it may not be profitable. She noted Ms. Stacks has started the Request for Proposals process for the City of St. Petersburg.

Vice Mayor Hock-DiPolito indicated the City of Clearwater Commission recently approved funding for the trail to extend from the Courtney Campbell Causeway to the Clearwater Trail.

Ms. Stacks responded that she is preparing a Request for Interest for vendors to tell them the business model they would propose to meet the objectives of the City. In addition, they are looking at the Tampa model. Commissioner Seel asked they consider coordinating with the other cities along the Trail and the BIG-C for a unified bike program. They could also include the bike rental companies in the discussions. She asked the BPAC to take the lead to work with the cities.

Commissioner Eggers suggested contacting the business community along the Trail to determine an inventory of the types of businesses along the trail and where they could co-exist in order to have a complete picture before proceeding.

Mr. Smith agreed with this direction.

Commissioner Cookie Kennedy read an email from Bert Valery regarding the need to standardize the Gulf Boulevard crosswalk treatments, noting FDOT's treatment is different than Pinellas County and Pinellas County responded they need to perform a study before installing any treatment. Mr. Smith agreed that there should be a consistent way for people to cross the road and it was something the BPAC could work on.

Ms. Ward noted there have been discussions regarding Gulf Boulevard and that staff could provide a presentation on the status of Gulf Boulevard at a future meeting.

VIII. REPORTS/UPDATE

A. PSTA Activities Report

Mr. Miller indicated PSTA has scheduled a facilitated workshop on February 18 to plan for PSTA's fiscal future. More detailed information will be included in the PSTA Board meetings and committee meetings. The facilitator has been meeting one on one with the Board members. They have scheduled a meeting with the Legislative Delegation to determine where they see bus transit in the future. PSTA has scheduled a presentation from FDOT at their Planning meeting this month regarding express lanes. PSTA has four new Board members: Commissioner Eggers and Gerard from the County, Commissioner Holmes from Largo, and Commissioner Bevis from Oldsmar. PSTA opened new transit center in Pinellas Park. Mr. Milder indicated he has been participating in the Selection Committee for a new TBARTA Executive Director, with a recommendation going to the TBARTA Board this month.

B. Director's Report

Ms. Ward indicated there was a joint meeting with the Pinellas and Hillsborough Bicycle Committees last evening in Oldsmar. They discussed inviting the Pasco MPO as they discuss connections to the trails going north. FDOT had a briefing with the Chairman regarding upcoming workshops for express lanes that will be held January 27 and 29.

IX. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

A. Committee Vacancies

Ms. Ward indicated she will be working with the LCB Chairman on the LCB vacancies.

B. Correspondence

C. Other

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:45 p.m.

Jim Kennedy, Chairman